

WORKING GIRLS RESPONSIVE TO MODESTY APPEAL

Woman Who Studied Cases of 110,000 Young Women Tells of Success by Power of Example and Suggestion--Importance of the Socially Prominent Barring the Extreme in Clothes Is Stressed

WELL, I'm fired!" said the little girl, flopping down in a chair in a heap. A very pretty girl so young looking that she must have had trouble getting her license to work, stylishly dressed too.

The woman in charge of the Girls' Work Department of a great welfare association looked up and asked: "What happened?"

"It was my first job and took me so long to get it that I daren't go home now I've lost it. Waiting on table in a restaurant. This morning I had given a man his eggs and toast and was just going to set a cup of hot coffee by his plate when he looked up and said: 'You'll meet me to-night at 6 o'clock, and I'll show you the highest kind of a time.' I wasn't feeling any too bright, so I fired the coffee in his face, and the boss fired me."

That was the story. As it was still early in the day some of the field workers got busy and found the girl another job so that she no longer dreaded to go home. Miss Gertrude Gogin, secretary of the National Girls' Work, Y. W. C. A., told the story. She added:

"This is the type of the younger group of industrial and business girl with whom we deal, trying to give her correct standards of living and some idea of sane recreation. Her age varies from 12 to 18, depending on State laws for permitting her to go to work. The younger ones are employed at mechanical tasks in factories, like counting spools of thread, or at filling and beginning stenography in office work. The others go from commercial high school to offices where they pretend to be expert stenographers."

"For five years and longer we have stressed work with these adolescent girls, and we are delighted to see that THE NEW YORK HERALD has taken up the same kind of work and is helping in a big way by showing just what the conditions are. Of course, THE HERALD articles have dealt with the younger society set, their manners, dress, irreverence toward elder persons and religion, but the lesson permeates to our girls, for their models are that very class of socially prominent adolescents."

Working Girls Are Manners And Dress of the Smart Set

"How our work girls swarm the streets at the noon hour! One sees them in shoals on the avenues up town and no doubt you see almost a continuously flowing river of them between 12 and 1:30 o'clock passing Chambers street and Broadway and scores of other business corners."

"They are of one type outwardly. They wear the sheerest low-neck waists, the flimsiest silk stockings, the most valuable looking fur coats. In fact, our working girls try their best to ape the pretty and showy young women whom one sees hopping out of an automobile drawn up in front of a jeweler's or a specialty shop any afternoon. The working girls will go to great lengths to deceive the ignorant passer, to make him believe they are as free from restraint as that other protected set. And why shouldn't they be?"

"I don't know how they do it, or rather, I do know but can't yet understand why they do some of the things. I asked the pretty girl who had just been 'fired' from her first job where she got her elegant fur coat. Said she, 'Oh, that's easy. It cost \$80 and I paid a dollar down and am to pay a dollar a month till I'm square. It wasn't very good

fur, but I take care of it and I can put it over."

"This is one of the dangers besetting a girl of this kind; it encourages her to other forms of deception that are character destroying. And suppose the girl I spoke of first had not been so precipitate; suppose she had 'lollied' along the stranger who wanted to give her the 'highest kind of a time'?"

"In the national campaign undertaken and carried on ever since the war against continual dancing, as if that were the solitary form of amusement open to a young girl, against unseemly and inappropriate dress and against dangerous freedom of ways in connection with the opposite sex about 110,000 girls of the adolescent age have come under the influence of the field workers and their 600 local assistants. Miss Gogin herself is much of the time travelling about the country investigating the work as it progresses and asking suggestions from the girls themselves for improving and enlarging it."

"Girls to-day; women to-morrow; and to help them grow to be fine women is our big task. It is so big, so full of difficult problems that we need all the help possible. We ought to get it from the very society set of girls THE NEW YORK HERALD is trying to convert to quieter manners and saner dress. I think if these girls knew how far reaching their example is they would help us and incidentally help themselves."

"In the first place it is not easy to get hold of the girls. They are suspicious of anything that has the word 'Christian' as its middle name. They don't want to come here at first or go to any of the other centres, but we trust to the influence of those girls that have come."

Finding There Is Pleasure In Things That Are Good

"Girls bring girls. That is the maxim in which we implicitly rely, and by it we recruit our girl reserves. We have no absurd restrictions; we do not object to dancing but encourage it in a wise way; we know that adolescent girls grow up to be better women when they have the natural association of boys and we offset the lack of home life by urging the girls to have their young male friends call on them in the public reception rooms provided for that very purpose."

"After a time, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, our 'reserves' decide that we are not narrow bigots in anything; they learn that there is pleasure or at least pleasant things even in religion; they see for themselves that there are other forms of recreation as jolly as dancing and finally they begin personally to take interest and even to suggest the things they would like to do. Then we feel they are safe."

"Now, the girls when they first come to us in this haughty, suspicious mood, almost resentful toward the friends that brought them along, very often look perfectly freakish. Their faces are covered with rouge and powder, their dress is almost ridiculous—is wholly so when you remember that they work hard for the money that pays for these cheap imitations of current fashions. They don't accept what we say and we don't urge it. We wait until they bring us suggestions of their own."

"In Chicago recently a strong effort was made to make these girls are profoundly affected by personality and when they see a teacher whom they like well dressed, even fashionably dressed, but not in the extreme folly of certain fashions, they unconsciously follow her. Occasionally, of course, there will be one who keeps right along with her paint and silly dress and nobody will take her to task for it. We know that she is

probably a good girl, but unawakened in some things."

"This Boston woman is optimistic about her sex and especially about the working girl. She would not admit, when questioned about her experience, that it had ever been unhappy. On this point she made the reassuring assertion that, potentially, every girl is 'right.'"

"All you have to do to bring out the good in these 15 and 17 year old girls is to surround them with the best examples. They are sure to reflect the finer qualities in them because they instinctively admire goodness and fineness. That's why you ought to stress the duty of their richer sisters to present to our working girls something commendable in dress and deportment. It would have a wonderful effect."

"Thus the simpler outfit frequently has but to be seen to be at once adopted by our reserves and we find that the 'teen' girls, who include grade school girls, high school girls, and younger girls in business and industry, have more appreciation of this outfit's advantages than the girls out of their teens. This is because these youngsters are nearer the 'play' age and have not yet acquired the 'beau' habit. But even after

Working girls properly and immodestly dressed. By example, the Y. W. C. A. hopes to abolish immodest clothes, excessive rouge, etc.



they have become young women the reserves have shown no disposition to fall back into foolish fashions.

"Faith in them is natural because they made most of the rules by which they live

Miss Gertrude Gogin, secretary of the National Girls' Work of the Y. W. C. A., in campaign to aid working girls.



at these questions of dress and deportment come up. The former was assumed as the major problem for high school girls and the younger industrial girls at a convention thus described which was recently held in Philadelphia.

"What the girls themselves said about modern dress and how it should be reformed while still remaining fashionable and attractive would help some of the would-be elder reformers."

"For we urge self-government, and it has been found to be the way to keep the girls keenly alive to the best things life offers either of edification or recreation. So these conferences are productive of great good. There will be a ten day conference held at Nepahwin, Pa., next summer, and the social problems, including this principal one of dress, will be threshed out."

"In order to work systematically five commissioners were appointed by the reserves, who will meet at Nepahwin to draw up a

Y. W. C. A. Questionnaire for High School Girls

A QUESTIONNAIRE by High School Girl Reserves of the Y. W. C. A. is to be sent to members throughout the country. Besides five questions each on the subjects of Health, Finance and Honor, five each are asked about the debated subjects, Dress and Conduct, which are as follows:

Have you kept the recommendation concerning the simple form of dress?
What do you consider violations of a sensible hairdress?
How prevalent are georgette waists in your school?
What do you consider the standard regarding cosmetics for high school girls, in school and outside of school?
What do you consider an ideal wardrobe for a high school girl?

QUESTIONS ON CONDUCT.

The following are the questions on Conduct:

Is there much powdering in public by high school girls?
Is there too much powdering for conduct on the street for Girl Reserves?
What do you think is the proper evening dress for high school girls?
Do you think that the use of perfume is appropriate for a high school girl?
Do you approve of socks for girls in high school?

Feminine Super Rights Idea of Pastor Analyzed by Woman Lawyer

A MOST interesting statement regarding his position on the subject of the super rights of women to which they naturally fell heir when they were given the right to vote without any attempt to repeal the laws that had been enacted for their protection is furnished by the Rev. Dr. William Carter, pastor of Throop Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn.

Dr. Carter has addressed several organizations recently upon the subject, "Have Women's Rights Brought Men's Wrongs?" a topic which never fails to draw an audience and which is understood or misinterpreted according to the state of mind of the hearer.

The minister, at his home, readily agreed to discuss the subject.

Nothing of the Woman Hater In Dr. Carter's Makeup

In justice to Dr. Carter it should be stated that he is most distinctly not a woman hater. Not once during the interview did he say anything which could be even distorted into a reflection upon the sex. He gave the impression of profound respect, innate chivalry and a desire to protect women against any injustice whatever. In a general way, and this statement did not come specifically from him, his criticism seems to be that women are attempting to abandon the protecting care of those who have been so proud to guard them against evil, and are seeking to secure by the enactment of more law that which has always been theirs ever since the male began to guard his mate and provide for his young.

"In the first place," said Dr. Carter, "I have always been opposed to giving women the right to vote. I was against it before the law was passed and I have observed nothing since its enactment to cause me to change my mind."

"Understand I do not oppose women's suffrage on the account of men, but on their own account. I think they made a mistake in asking for it. One reason is that a man always went to the polls and voted for himself and wife anyway, and they always very largely controlled what we did."

"My principal reason, however, for opposing giving them the right to vote is the result it is having and will continue to have upon woman and her manner of living."

Rev. Dr. Carter Sees Unusual Legal Favoritism to Sex Now That the Ballot Has Been Given, but Miss Stephenson Asserts Protective Laws Are Not Essential

Also I am of the opinion that women did not care about having the right to vote. Certainly the majority of those I personally know did not care about it, and men from other sections of the country with whom I have talked tell me the same thing is true where they reside.

"Upon several occasions I have spoken of the fact that women, having been given the right to vote, have been allowed to think that they are upon an absolutely legal equality with men, when as a matter of fact they are not seeking equality and do not want it. They want something more than equality. They want equality plus. They do not want to repeal the laws which men passed in lieu of giving them the vote. Let us see what some of these are."

"First there are the alimony and divorce laws. Mind you, I do not believe in alimony at all for either women or men. I believe it only for the children. The little innocents should be protected, but alimony should stop right there. However, it is a fact that a woman can sue for alimony and a man has not that right, no matter how well able his wife may be to pay him. Can it be said that such a state is fair and that men and women are equal before the law in that instance?"

"One ground for divorce is non-support, but this allegation may be made only by a woman."

"A man is responsible for his wife's debts, but she is not responsible for his. This may be carried to an absurdity. A woman directly after her marriage may begin buying extravagantly and absolutely wreck her husband financially if she wants to by purchasing jewelry and things which may be concealed. He has no recourse and can be taken into court and made to pay. The wife is not responsible for even the smallest debt of her husband."

Dower Laws Put Man's Property At Mercy of His Wife's Whims

"Here is another thing a woman can do. If her husband be infirm and to her thinking about to die she may make thousands of dollars in debts, just as we know some young Englishmen go into debt expecting to pay when they succeed to the title. When her husband dies, although she may be wealthy in her own name, a woman's debts must be paid from the proceeds of her husband's estate, and if there is not sufficient left the merchants are not paid. This is true only of women, not men."

"Think of the dower laws for a moment. I know of a case where a young woman married an old man. I put it that way because he did not do the marrying. She did it. He was wealthy. Shortly after the wedding she told him that he must sell his property. He demurred, saying he had good investments. The wife plainly said he must sell because she wanted her share of what had been his until he married. When he refused she told him she would refuse to sign any deeds or any mortgage loans on his property. She kept her threat and brought him to the verge of bankruptcy."

"Then there are the inheritance laws. I heard of a man who decided to make a little extra provision for his wife. So he saved his money and bought a piece of property. He gave it to her. She died. He thought it would be returned to him by the administrator, but she had died without making a will so he was cut off entirely from inheriting her estate, and he saw the property that he had worked and saved for divided among her sisters. Of course, they had no children."

"In thirty-eight States of the Union the law specifically states that a man shall have no share in the earnings of his wife, but all States—I think there is not a single exception, including the thirty-eight referred to—make a man responsible for the household debts. In other words, if they both work he has no share in her earnings, but she has a share in his pay envelope."

"One of the statistical bureaus recently issued a statement declaring that 4,000,000 persons are out of work in the United States. If this be true the fact that women are taking the places of men is largely responsible. Of course there has been an industrial let up, too, but it did not throw anything like 4,000,000 out of work. The women took the places of men during the war and now refuse to give them up. The employers retain them because they will work for less money. We men are out of work. They take our jobs, keep our pay, will not share with us what they earn and then make us pay the household bills or go to jail. Surely the criticism that women think quickly but not deeply is correct."

"Now here is a curious phase to this whole situation. Neither I nor any other right thinking man really wants to repeal these laws for the protection of women. They need them now just as much as they ever did and we men will continue to protect them whether they want us or not."

Women Want Equality Only, Says Defender

THE reply of Miss Sarah Stephenson to the views of Dr. William Carter on the super rights of women is an illuminating statement of the woman's side of the question. She presents her opinions forcefully and with emphasis.

"Please do not get the idea," she said, "that I am a bitter feminist, because I am not. I am not bitter about anything. I want to be a friendly kind of person, and I always endeavor to see the humor of every situation."

Miss Stephenson undoubtedly succeeds in her endeavors. She is decidedly affable, and one easily understands why she has been inducted by the organizations of the First, Seventh and Sixteenth Assembly districts of Brooklyn and various women's organizations in Brooklyn for the position of City Magistrate, with the request that she be assigned to the Woman's Court and the Domestic Relations Court. There will be six vacancies to be filled on May 1 by Mayor Hylan.

for themselves. For instance, we encourage free expression of opinion on all subjects kindred to the ones we are discussing. The girls frequently hold conventions lasting from Friday night until Sunday night, and

pal, a companion with whom he can discuss the questions of the day.

"Since women have been given the right to vote I see a big difference in the homes I visit. The women love their homes just as much as formerly and take just as good care of them, but they are also informing themselves about the affairs of the world and can discuss matters intelligently at their own tables with their families instead of remaining silent."

"An intelligent man does not want to marry a dishwasher. He wants a wife."

"We are told that women want more than equality—equality plus. I believe it is. Recently the women appeared at Albany and asked that they be placed upon an absolute equality with the men. We do not want the protection of special laws. We are able to take care of ourselves."

"A great cry is made about alimony. It is perfectly right that a man should pay alimony to the wife that is forced to leave him because of his misconduct. The reason is perfectly simple. When a man marries his wife either gives up the job she has or she fails to learn any work or profession. She engages solely in the business of managing his home economically and intelligently. He remains on the job that brings in the revenue. Then comes the divorce. Is

the wife to be thrown out of doors, without any knowledge of how to go about the business of earning a living for herself and her children, and without any means of support? Surely it is not necessary to argue the question."

How One Woman Lost Out In Legal Fight Over Savings

"We had a case here in Brooklyn in 1914 that shows what can still be done to women. A certain woman skimped, and saved and went without the clothes she would have liked to wear until she had increased a gift of \$200 from her husband to about \$500. Then her husband tried to get the money out of the savings bank. The matter was contested in court and the law gave the man the money because she had saved it from the household expense allowance. They took her money away from her."

"We are sustained in our contention for equality by the Bible. In Genesis it is written, 'And God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,' &c. He did not say 'Let him have dominion.' He said 'Them.' Directly under this passage we find:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. Male and female created he them."

"There is one thing I want to say in conclusion, and I wish I knew some way to be very forceful about this. There will continue to be happy homes, splendid fathers, good mothers and children in this world, no matter what laws are passed, repealed or fail to pass. There will always be fine, sweet and noble men and women to carry on the work of the home and the work of the world."

questionnaire in which these much discussed things shall have the leading place. These commissioners have done their work and the questionnaire has been sent out broadcast. Answers to it are just beginning to come in. There is a unanimous opinion expressed discrediting the mode of dress of the present day and advocating proper changes; but it is amusing to note that none of those who answer the questions wishes to be considered 'unfashionable,' but all believe it is a girl's duty to look as nice as she can and to have as good a time as she can."

"That's what we advocate for our members. When they think of this place we want them to think of lots of fun, of more friends, of peppy programmes, of new interests and a chance to do other girls some good."

Acting on the Principle That a Good Time Is Normal

"For we act on the principle that having a good time is normal. If we get the opportunity we can show two types of girls—those who need it most—that to follow the things fashion decrees, that is to follow them blindly, is not to have a good time. Quite the reverse."

"The two types referred to are the factory girls or those whose work-a-day lives are colorless, and the department store girls, who see life too highly colored. Undoubtedly these two afford us the vastest problem and are hardest to reach and influence. The former require excitement and go to dangerous lengths to secure it; they are the girls who come to harm in cheap dance halls. The other girl is apt to ruin herself trying to look in a modish model (made by herself in her hall bedroom) as gorgeous as the rich man's daughter does in some costly stuff. Their temptations differ in kind but they resemble each other in degree. Both are hard to withstand."

"But the young girls in both these classes have pretty good heads and when a thing is in front of them they can see it. They realize, for instance, when they see how attractively and yet how modestly some girls can dress, that it is foolish to adopt extremes of fashion. I have scarcely seen it to fail that when a girl who has been wearing to business a frail diaphanous waist sees how much prettier and more serviceable is a washable one, the next time she adds to her business outfit she supplies it with several of the washable variety."

"Example! Oh, the force of it! Once let the society young woman wash her face clean of the nasty rouge and paint and you will see the working girl will clean hers, too. Once let the society young woman put on sensible shoes and drop her skirt to their tops and you will meet in the business sections shoals of pretty young women in decently long skirts and sensible foot gear."

"I repeat that the force of example, everywhere powerful, is particularly so with these self-supporting girls. How much the daughters of the rich could do for these girls, without a minute's interference with their own pleasure and comfort! Do you suppose the rich girls ever think of this?"

Slave and Wife Alike

MISS SARAH STEPHENSON is a parallel. Here is one which she has drawn of the legal status of women and slaves in 1848 before the slaves were freed and before the fight began to improve the legal status of women:

SLAVE	WIFE
Could not own property	Could not own property
Keep earnings	Keep earnings
Make legal contract	Make legal contract
Sue or be sued	Sue or be sued
Establish business	Establish business
Sign as a witness	Sign as a witness
Testify in court	Testify in court
Dead in law	Sunk identity in that of husband
Children belonged to master	Those of wife to husband
If slave left master, could take nothing with her	Neither could wife, as all her property belonged to him
Could be whipped by master	Husband could beat wife